

REMARKS

Independent claims 1, 11, and 15 are amended above to specifically recite an inner circular wedge area defining a ratio of formal to informal learning for each of said zones. Support is found in related application Serial No. 10/729,747 filed concurrently and incorporated by reference. See page 6, line 23 to page 7, line 15 and FIGs. 2 and 3 of that application. No new matter is entered.

Claims 1, 3-11, 13-15, and 17-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sketch (US 2002/0077884) in view of Pham (US 5,970,482). Applicants respectfully disagree with this rejection as applied to independent claims 1, 11, and 15 as amended above, for the following reasons.

Claim 1 requires providing a learning solution context as a circular diagram having specific radial width for zones and an inner circular wedge area defining a ratio of formal to informal learning for each of said zones. As noted by the Examiner in the present Office Action, page 4, second paragraph, Sketch does not teach a circular diagram. Pham teaches a circular diagram, for example, in his FIG. 1. However, Pham's circular diagram does not teach an inner circular wedge area for each of said zones as now clearly required by Applicants' claim 1. See FIGs. 2 and 3 of related application 10/729,747 for an example of the circular diagram having such an inner circular wedge area for each of the zones as required by claim 1.

Claim 1 and claims 11 and 15 for similar reasons are therefore allowable over the combination of Sketch and Pham for this reason alone.

Claim 1 also requires that the radial width and inner circular wedge area define a ratio of formal to informal learning. Informal learning is defined in related application 10/729,747 to mean learning in which the learner decides when and how sources are used.

The Examiner has taken the term "defining a ratio of formal to informal learning" to have the meaning of making possible changes to existing learning solutions as disclosed in Sketch. Making changes, however, does not define a ratio of formal to informal learning as required by claim 1 because changes can be made to formal or informal learning solutions.

Claim 1 and claims 11 and 15 are therefore allowable over Sketch and Pham for this reason also.

Finally, claim 1 as amended above requires defining the content of a plurality of solution components to align with said zones and said circular wedge area for each of said zones of said solution context. This process step is explained in Applicants' Specification, page 6, lines 16-23. Clearly each of the solution components are aligned to the solution context.

The Examiner states that Sketch's description of "eliminating gaps between the assessed level of functional competency and a level of functional competency required for the

employment function" teaches this. Applicants respectfully disagree. There is no level of assessed functional competency in claim 1. Solution components are aligned to the solution context, in claim 1, not an assessed functional level to a required functional level as described by Sketch. Sketch and Pham, therefore, do not describe this required step of claim 1.

Claim 1 and similarly claims 11 and 15 are allowable over Sketch and Pham for this reason alone.

Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) and allowance of independent claims 1, 11, and 15 and also allowance of the remaining claims which depend therefrom.

The Application is deemed in condition for allowance and such action by the Examiner is urged. Should differences remain, however, which do not place one/more of the remaining claims in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to phone the undersigned at the number provided below for the purpose of providing constructive assistance and suggestions in accordance with M.P.E.P. Sections 707, 707.07(d) and 707.07(j) in order that allowable claims can be presented, thereby placing the application in condition for allowance without further proceedings being necessary.

Respectfully submitted,

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